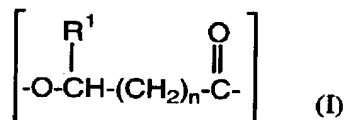


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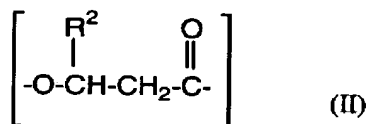
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

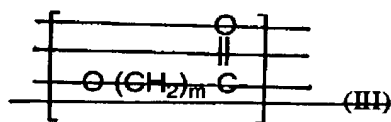
1. *(Currently amended)* An environmentally degradable melt spun composition comprising:
 a PLA polymer or copolymer; and
 a polyhydroxyalkanoate copolymer comprising at least two randomly repeating monomer units
 wherein a first monomer unit has structure (I)



where R^1 is H, or C1 or C2 alkyl, and n is 1 or 2; and
 wherein a second monomer unit has structure (II)



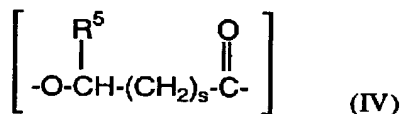
where R^2 is a C3-C9 alkyl or C3-C9 alkenyl,



wherein the composition is in the form of a fiber having a diameter of about ~~30~~ 50 micrometers or less.

2. *(Original)* The composition of Claim 1 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate copolymer comprises a third randomly repeating monomer having structure (IV):

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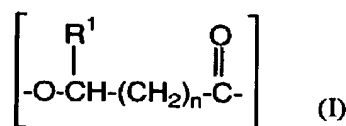


where R⁵ is H, or C1-C19 alkyl or alkenyl, and s is 1 or 2, with the proviso that the third monomer is not the same as the first or second monomer.

3. *(Original)* The composition of Claim 1 further comprising a second polyhydroxyalkanoate polymer or copolymer.
4. *(Original)* The composition of Claim 1 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate copolymer is present in an amount of from 10% to 90% by weight of the fiber.
5. *(Original)* The composition of Claim 1 wherein the PLA polymer or copolymer is present in an amount of from 10% to 90% by weight of the fiber.
6. *(Original)* The composition of Claim 1 comprising a PLA polymer and wherein the PLA polymer is crystallizable polylactic acid having a melting temperature of from 160°C to 175°C.
7. *(Canceled)*
8. *(Canceled)*
9. *(Previously presented)* The environmentally degradable multicomponent fiber of Claim 22 wherein the fiber has two components having a sheath-core configuration wherein the first component is the sheath and the second component is the core.
10. *(Previously presented)* The environmentally degradable multicomponent fiber of Claim 22 wherein the fiber has two components having a sheath-core configuration wherein the first component is the core and the second component is the sheath.
11. *(Currently amended)* An environmentally degradable fiber produced by melt spinning a composition comprising a polyhydroxyalkanoate copolymer and a PLA polymer or copolymer, wherein said ~~polyhydroxyalkanoate~~ polyhydroxyalkanoate copolymer comprises at least two randomly repeating monomer units

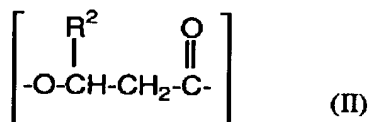
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wherein a first monomer unit has structure (I)



where R^1 is H, or C1 or C2 alkyl, and n is 1 or 2; and

wherein a second monomer unit has structure (II)



where R^2 is a C3-C9 alkyl or C3-C9 alkenyl,

wherein the fiber has a diameter of about 50 micrometers or less.

12. *(Original)* A nonwoven web comprising the fiber of Claim 1.
13. *(Previously presented)* A nonwoven web comprising the multicomponent fiber of Claim 21.
14. *(Previously presented)* A nonwoven web comprising the multicomponent fiber of Claim 22.
15. *(Original)* A disposable article comprising the nonwoven web of Claim 12.
16. *(Original)* A disposable article comprising the nonwoven web of Claim 13.
17. *(Previously presented)* An environmentally degradable composition comprising a 3-hydroxybutyrate/3-hydroxyhexanoate copolymer and a PLA polymer or copolymer wherein the composition is in the form of a fiber having a diameter of about 50 micrometers or less.
18. *(Previously presented* - note: this claim was amended in the Amendment dated December 9, 2003, however in that paper the heading of this claim was erroneously listed as "Original". The previous amendment is indicated below, to avoid printing errors.)* An

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environmentally degradable bicomponent fiber comprising a sheath-core configuration wherein the core is a 3-hydroxybutyrate/3-hydroxyhexanoate copolymer and the sheath is a PLA polymer or copolymer wherein said fiber has a diameter of about 50 micrometers or less.

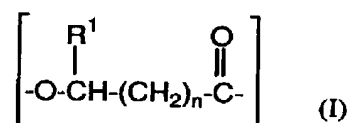
19. (Original) A nonwoven web comprising the fiber of Claim 17.

20. (Original) A disposable article comprising the nonwoven web of Claim 19.

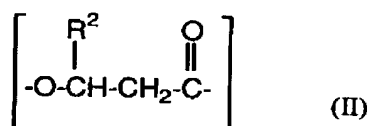
21. (Currently amended) An environmentally degradable multicomponent fiber wherein at least one component has a composition comprising:

a PLA polymer or copolymer; and

a polyhydroxyalkanoate copolymer comprising at least two randomly repeating monomer units wherein a first monomer unit has structure (I)



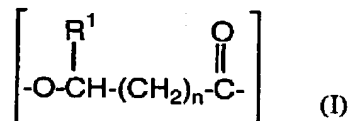
where R¹ is H, or C1 or C2 alkyl, and n is 1 or 2; and
 wherein a second monomer unit has structure (II)



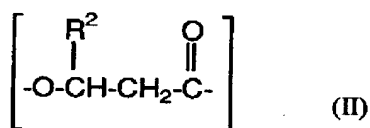
where R² is a C3-C19 alkyl or C3-C19 alkenyl,
 wherein the composition is in the form of a fiber having a diameter of about 50 micrometers or less.

22. (Currently amended) An environmentally degradable multicomponent fiber wherein a first component comprises a polyhydroxyalkanoate copolymer comprising at least two randomly repeating monomer units wherein a first monomer unit has structure (I)

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where R^1 is H, or C1 or C2 alkyl, and n is 1 or 2; and
 wherein a second monomer unit has structure (II)



where R^2 is a C3-C19 alkyl or C3-C19 alkenyl,
 and a second component comprises a PLA polymer or copolymer,
wherein said fiber has a diameter of about 50 micrometers or less.

23. (New) The composition of Claim 1 wherein the fiber has a diameter of about 30 micrometers or less.